

Message Text

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SUBJECT: VICE PRESIDENT OF IRAQ MAKES OFFICIAL VISIT TO CAR

SUMMARY: IRAQ VICE PRESIDENT TAHA MUHI-AL-DIN MA'RUF VISITED
CAR MAY 13-15 AT THE INVITATION OF PRESIDENT JEAN-BEDEL BOKASSA.
ACCOMPANYING HIM WAS A FIFTY-MEMBER DELEGATION WHICH INCLUDED
FOREIGN COMMERCE MINISTER KMAT AL AZZAWA. JOINT COMMUNIQUE
ISSUED AT THE END OF VISIT TOOK STRONG PRO-PALESTINIAN POSITION
AND ENDORSED ZONE OF PEACE IN INDIAN OCEAN. IRAQI QUID PRO QUO NOT
MADE PUBLIC, BUT OFFER OF AID TO CAR ALMOST CERTAINLY MADE.
END SUMMARY.

1. A LENGTHY JOINT COMMUNIQUE WAS ISSUED AT THE END OF THE OFFICIAL
VISIT OF IRAQI VICE-PRESIDENT TO THE CAR HIGHLIGHTS OF THE
COMMUNIQUE WHICH WAS SIGNED BY PRESIDENT BOKASSA AND VICE-PRESIDENT
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MA'RUF WERE THAT QTE A PEACEFUL, JUST AND DURABLE SOLUTION TO THE

PALESTINIAN PROBLEM CANNOT BE ESTABLISHED WITHOUT THE COMPLETE WITHDRAWAL FROM ALL OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES AND THE RECUPERATION BY THE ARAB PALESTINIAN PEOPLE OF ALL THEIR NATIONAL RIGHTS TO THEIR TERRITORY AND THEIR FATHERLAND UNQTE. THE COMMUNIQUE ALSO GAVE QTE UNCONDITIONAL SUPPORT TO THE CREATION OF A ZONE OF PEACE INDIAN OCEAN FREE OF FOREIGN INFLUENCE AND BASES UNQTE. IT CALLS FOR A RECONVENING OF THE AFRO-ARAB SUMMIT CONFERENCE QTE AT THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE MOMENT UNQTE AND EXTENDED WISHES FOR SUCCESS TO THE COLOMBO NON-ALIGNED MEETING IN AUGUST. THE TWO COUNTRIES AGREED TO LOOK FOR WAYS TO GIVE THE CONFERENCE QTE A NEW IMPETUS UNQTE.

2. IN REGARD TO AFRICAN QUESTIONS, THE TWO LEADERS EXPRESSED NEW SUPPORT FOR AFRICAN LIBERATION MOVEMENTS AND DENOUNCED COLONIALISM, NEO-COLONIALISM, RACIAL DISCRIMINATION IN ALL OF ITS FORMS INCLUDING IMPERIALISM, QTE THE COMMON ENEMY OF THE THIRD WORLD UNQTE. THE COMMUNIQUE ALSO DEALT WITH THE URGENT NEED TO CREATE A MORE EQUITABLE INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ORDER BASED ON THE RESOLUTIONS OF THE UNGA SPECIAL SESSION IN ORDER TO GUARANTEE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES QTE A JUST RENUMERATION FOR THEIR NATIONAL RICHES UNQTE.

3. FINALLY, THE COMMUNIQUE ANNOUNCED THE CREATION OF A JOINT CAR/IR/ COMMISSION WHICH WILL BRING TOGETHER EXPERTS OF THE RESPECTIVE DEPARTMENTS OF COMMERCE, INDUSTRY AND MINES IN THE SECOND HALF OF JUNE AT BAGHDAD. A LARGER, SECOND MEETING WILL TAKE PLACE AT BAGHDAD AT A DATE TO BE DETERMINED TO STUDY FILES IN VARIOUS OTHER AREAS.

COMMENT: MA'RUF'S OFFICIAL SOJOURN IN THE CAR, A VERY BELATED FOLLOW-UP TO BOKASSA'S STATE VISIT TO BAGHDAD IN 1972, COMES CLOSELY ON THE HEELS OF A CABINET-LEVEL LIBYAN DELEGATION EARLIER THIS MONTH. IT IS THE LATEST AND MOST VISIBLE EXAMPLE OF ARAB OVERTURES TO THE CAR, WHICH HAS UNTIL NOW AVOIDED TAKING STRONGLY PRO-ARAB POSITIONS ON

ISRAELI AND ZIONISM QUESTIONS IN MULTILATERAL FORM. THE VISIT IS CONSISTENT WITH OTHER SIGNS OF IMPROVED CAR-ARAB RELATIONS INCLUDING BOKASSA'S AWARDED THE SIZEABLE LEBANESE COMMUNITY HERE HONORARY CAR CITIZENSHIP IN DECEMBER, FOLLOWED IN APRIL BY THE OFFER OF MONOPOLY MARKETING/EXPORT RIGHTS ON COFFEE TO AN EGYPTIAN FIRM.

THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE GOCAR IS DEFINITELY MODIFYING ITS TRADITIONAL POSITION OF NON-SUPPORT OF THE ARAB WORLD ON MIDDLE EAST LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ISSUES IS NOT CLEAR. STATEMENTS IN THE JOINT COMMUNIQUE ARE THE MOST FAR-REACHING ENDORSED BY PRESIDENT BOKASSA IN RECENT YEARS. THE STATEMENT ON PALESTINE GOES A LONG WAY TOWARDS PUTTING THE CAR ON THE SIDE OF THE MAXIMALIST PALESTINIAN POSITION. WHETHER BOKASSA WILL MAINTAIN THIS POSITION WILL DEPEND UPON THE WILLINGNESS OF IRAQ AND OTHER ARAB STATES TO MOVE BEYOND OFFICIAL VISITS AND COMMUNIQUE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF A MORE ATTRACTIVE ECONOMIC/FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

PACKAGE

THAN THEY ARE AT PRESENT PROVIDING. LOCAL ARAB DIPLOMATS HAVE BEEN
TELLING THIS TO THEIR FOREIGN MINISTRIES FOR SOME TIME. THE IRAQI
VICE PRESIDENT'S VISIT MAY BE ONE OF THE FIRST TANGIBLE SIGNS THAT
THE MESSAGE IS FINALLY GETTING THROUGH AS WE ASSUME THAT THE IRAQ'S
PROMISED A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF NEW AID IN RETURN FOR BOKASSA'S ENDORSE-
MENT OF POLITICAL POSITIONS FAVORED BY THEM.

BOKASSA MAY ALSO WISH TO USE THIS COMMUNIQUE TO REDUCE HIS ISOLATION
FROM THE MAINSTREAM OF AFRO-ASIAN THINKING. HE MAY WELL ESTIMATE
THAT A SOMEWHAT MORE RADICAL RHETORIC WILL DIMINISH HIS VULNERABILITY
TO OUTSIDE PRESSURE, AS WELL AS MAXIMIZE HIS ACCESS TO AID.

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